

Answers to frequently asked questions for first time visitors to Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

COMMUNICATIONS

1) How available are public telephones where one can call internationally? Are calling cards sold locally and can they be used in-country?

International calls cannot be made from public telephones, but they can be made from post offices, individual apartments, or cellular phones. Calling cards are available for local calls only.

If you have high speed internet connections you can make inexpensive international calls. This calling system can be purchased online. Doing a Google search for "international calls Bosnia" will identify several vendors, but it only works with DSL or Cable connections, not dial up.

2) How available are cell phones? Do they have reliable service? Do they function outside of the capital city? What is their general cost?

You will be given a cell phone from the Office of Public Affairs throughout your grant period.

Cell phones are very common, reliable and easy to obtain. The cost per minute for a local call is 0.45 KM, 2.09 KM for a call to the US and 2.61 KM for calls to Europe. Foreigners must pay a 500 KM refundable deposit in order to obtain a cellular phone number.

3) How reliable is the local government's international mail service? Would scholars be better off to rely on international shippers, such as DHL and Federal Express? Which international shippers operate in BiH?

Mail service in Bosnia and Herzegovina is dependable and inexpensive, but scholars should be aware that all incoming packages are subject to inspection and customs duties. Express delivery service and international delivery service are also offered through DHL, Federal Express and TNT.

4) Where is the main post office located?

The main post office is located at 8 Obala Kulina Bana Street, in the center of town.

5) How available are fax machines?

Faxes may be sent from most post offices. Fax machines can also be purchased for approximately 200 KM.

6) How available is the Internet and/or e-mail? Are there Internet cafes or IATP public access sites in your city? What is generally the cost for using a computer at an Internet cafe? Is it possible to print at Internet cafés?

Internet access is readily available through ISP's and Internet cafés. It costs 4 KM per hour to use the Internet at an Internet café, and it is not possible to print web pages or other documents.

TRANSPORTATION

1) What kinds of public transportation are available? How reliable are the buses, trolleys, metro, etc.? What do they cost? Are weekly or monthly passes available? Where could one buy them?

There are reliable public buses and streetcars that run throughout the city. One ride costs 2 KM, but weekly and monthly passes are also available.

2) Is it easy to get a taxi? Are most taxis part of an organized service, or not? Is it wise to negotiate with the driver over the price and is it appropriate to tip? What is the appropriate amount?

Taxis are easy to come by in Sarajevo, and can be ordered over the phone or at taxi stands. There is no need to negotiate over the price, as rates are already established. Be aware that the price on the meter is not exactly correct; drivers round up to the next whole number.

3) How available is public transportation to the regions? Other major cities?

There are public buses that provide access to cities outside of Bosnia as well as other countries in the Balkan region.

4) Where are the major airports located? Are there separate airports for domestic and international travel?

The main international airport is in Sarajevo, although smaller airports in Banja Luka, Tuzla and Mostar offer limited international connections only.

MONEY

1) Is it easy to exchange money? Are dollars accepted anywhere?

All banks exchange foreign currency. If you need to purchase Euro's only the larger international banks will do that at specific locations (Raiffisen

Bank near ulica Jezero)

2) Is it worthwhile for international visitors to bring credit cards? If yes, which credit cards are accepted?

Visa and Master Card are widely accepted.

3) Are ATM machines in use throughout the country?

There are plenty of ATM machines in Sarajevo, but there are fewer outside of the capital. Cities in which grantees are placed have ATMs.

4) Can traveler's checks be used?

Traveler's checks can be used in select locations, mostly banks and hotels. There is a charge to cash them and we do not recommend them. The smaller bank branches will not cash travelers' checks or exchange dollars.

5) Can US personal checks be cashed anywhere?

No

SAFETY

1) Are there numbers one could call in case of an emergency? (ambulance, fire, police, ambulance, etc.)

- 122 POLICE
- 123 FIRE DEPARTMENT
- 124 or 611-111 MEDICAL EMERGENCY/Ambulance
- 1182 PHONE INFORMATION
- 125 EXACT TIME
- 234 857 LOST LUGGAGE-AIRPORT
- 220 724, 220 721 TOURIST CENTER
- 1155 or 1156 for city taxi

HEALTH

1) Are there any American or Western doctors working in BiH at this time? If yes, please provide their names and contact information. If not, do you know of any particular doctor or health care organization frequently visited by foreigners?

Kosovo Hospital-University of Sarajevo (VIP's Clinic)
+387-33-445-522

+387-33444-800 ext. 3342 or ext. 2955

Contact Persons: Mirsada or Senada

This hospital stands as the oldest and largest medical facility and healthcare teaching institution in the entire country.

State Hospital (former military hospital)

+387-33-285-100

Originally military hospital, the State hospital has a 130 years long tradition of providing health care in Sarajevo.

See the following link for more information:

<http://sarajevo.usembassy.gov/doctors-list.html>

2) Where are the local pharmacies? How available are most prescription drugs?

There are numerous pharmacies in Sarajevo that offer a wide variety of prescription and over the counter drugs.

For more details please check with responsible officers at OPA. We can provide you a copy of the very informative booklet developed by the American Embassy personnel and their dependents regarding health and medical services available in Sarajevo. This booklet can be found on the Embassy web page.

After Hours Pharmacy:

1) Pharmacy "Bascarsija"

Obala Kulina Bana 25

Phone: (033) 272 300

2) Pharmacy "Novo Sarajevo"

Zmaja od Bosne 51

Phone: (033) 713 830

3) Are there any particular drugs or medications that are not available in Bosnia that scholars should know to bring from home?

While most drugs are available, Western scholars needing a particular medication are advised to bring a large supply with them.

4) Are there any particular toiletries that are not available in your country (e.g. contact lens solution)?

No, almost everything is available.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

1) Are there any particular customs that foreigners should be aware of when arriving in BiH? What is the custom on gift giving?

There are no particular customs that foreigners should be aware of. Gifts are not necessary, but always accepted. It is common to remove shoes when entering someone's home.

During official courtesy call with Embassy Officer(s) it is very nice if you have your University flag, mug or similar present as you will be receiving similar presents from your hosts and contacts. Any kind of info material about your institution would be a great cultural/educational gesture.

2) Additionally, what is the culture around networking? Can scholars simply contact other scholars, or do they need to send out letters of invitation announcing their desire to meet other scholars?

A simple telephone call and introduction is sufficient.

We recommend you to first wait until formal introductions with dean's or heads of programs were made before contacting anyone directly.

SHOPPING

1) How available are PC or Macintosh computer supplies?

Both are readily available in the capital.

It may be difficult to find computer repair shops.

LASTLY, any other advice for first-time visitors to Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Come with an open mind and enjoy the hospitality of the Bosnian people!